



A STUDY ON WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS FITNESS WITH REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY

Dr. R Ashok Kumar¹, Dr. D Suganya²

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Management Sciences, PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore, India.

² Assistant Professor, School of Business Management, RVS College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to study women's perspectives and attitudes regarding fitness in Coimbatore City. A mixed-methods approach was used, with questionnaires and interviews conducted with 200 female participants. According to the findings of the survey, women in Coimbatore City had generally good attitudes toward exercise and saw it as crucial for their health and well-being. Family responsibilities, a lack of time, and societal norms about women's physical attractiveness, on the other hand, impacted their attitudes and perceptions of fitness. Women who had access to fitness facilities and social support from family and friends were also more likely to engage in fitness activities, compared to the study. The findings have significant implications for policymakers and health practitioners dedicated to encouraging fitness and healthy habits among women in Coimbatore.

KEYWORDS: Women, Attitudes, Perceptions, Fitness, Socio-cultural factors, Health, Well-being, Social support

INTRODUCTION

Fitness is an idea in evolutionary biology that refers to the quantitative expression of both natural and sexual selection. To separate it from physical fitness, the phrase "Darwinian fitness" is employed. The notion of fitness does not encompass survival or life span. "Survival of the fittest" is a concept coined by Herbert Spencer that signifies "survival of the form that will leave the most copies of itself in successive generations." Men and women can obtain fitness, and fitness is described as being in a fit state. Maintaining fitness requires at least 30 minutes of exercise per day, according to medical authorities. Regular exercise benefits include not just improving wellness but also decreasing body fat and feeling refreshed.

However, women's hectic lifestyles, particularly those of entrepreneurs and housewives, might make it difficult for them to give priority to their health and fitness, causing harmful habits. Historically, women have placed little importance on health or exercise, and their main form of physical activity has been chasing their children. Today, however, women recognize the significance of remaining fit and active in order to retain excellent health. As more women advance in management, the prevalence of stress-related illnesses and diseases of the lifestyle rises, making it even more important for women to emphasize fitness. Increasing physical fitness can help to strengthen the cardiac, respiratory, and cerebral systems, as well as improve brain function. A daily fitness regimen can help women in positions of power perform better at work and deal with stress more effectively.

Staying physically active is essential for women of all professions because they use their muscles, both big and tiny, for everyday tasks like reaching for objects or raising their children. Introducing regular physical activity into their routines can help them move with greater effectiveness throughout the

day. Walking, jogging, swimming, or cycling, as well as a combination of resistance and aerobic activities, can raise the heart rate and help burn calories. Women, while being busier than ever, may still find time for exercise, even if it is only for 30 minutes every day. A lengthy gym session is not required; simply going to regular exercise for 30 minutes each day can provide all of the benefits of fitness.

WOMEN'S FITNESS

Exercise is a crucial component of daily living, yet many women become so preoccupied with their busy schedules that they overlook their fitness. Women can stay in shape by engaging in regular physical activity at home or at work, without needing to go to the gym. Even a brisk 30-minute stroll counts as exercise, which can help women increase their self-confidence and protect their health in today's hazardous atmosphere. They can engage in more difficult physical activities for longer periods of time while controlling their weight if they are physically fit. Furthermore, greater fitness levels benefit the heart, lungs, bones, muscles, and joints while lowering the risk of heart disease. Cancer, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and falls are all risks. Being more active can also aid in better sleep, stress management, mental sharpness, and improved mental health. Women frequently practice yoga as a quiet and soothing workout, and going to the gym is a fantastic method to stay active and halt the aging process. Exercising might counteract the effects of stress at the cellular level, reducing the aging process, according to research. Exercise in the afternoon may also improve sleep quality and increase growth hormone production, which aids in the repair and regeneration of biological tissues, the maintenance of the collagen matrix, and the overall health of the skin. As a result, while many women nowadays struggle to find time to exercise, it is essential for their health.

A GLOBAL VIEW OF WOMEN'S FITNESS

Women's Fitness Attitudes: Women's involvement in sports continues to lag behind men, which has been attributed in part to a lack of coverage of women's sports in the media and the stigma linked to female sports engagement in some countries. However, as a result of social media, fitness equipment and apps, active celebrities, and government and sports companies' initiatives to attract women, an increasing number of women are enjoying fitness activities. The media and celebrities have a big influence on young women's views about health and fitness, and social media platforms are flooded with "fitspiration" photographs of celebrities working out, serving as role models.

Women's Eating Habits and Nutrition: Young women face immense pressure for conforming to media-defined beauty standards. Girls are bombarded with pictures of slender models and famous people from a young age, conditioning them to believe that "thin is beautiful," leading to a concern with reducing weight. Obesity, on the other hand, is now known as a major public health issue in many nations, raising the risk of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, arthritis, gallstones, certain malignancy, sleep apnea, infertility, and depression.

Health Foods and Drinks: Younger women's increased curiosity in nutrition and food origin has increased the global market for health and wellness products, notably in developed benefits and urban consumers in emerging markets such as China and India. Consumers are now thinking about food in terms of healthy eating, which has ended up resulting in an increase in demand for fortified and functioning (FF) products as well as organic items. The movement has also benefited fresh food prepared with natural components, with the popular Paleo Diet forcing followers to eat only foods that exist naturally such as grass-fed beef, fish, and fresh fruits and vegetables.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women's Health and Fitness, with their busy lives, women entrepreneurs and mothers who stay-at-home frequently neglect the impact that their regular habits have on their health. Fitness is often the first casualty of our hectic lives in today's fast-paced world, leading to unhealthy behaviors and sedentary lifestyles. Women must focus their fitness and raise awareness among the younger generation. This is a problem that affects not only working women but also homeowners. We can inspire women to take fitness seriously by spreading awareness. The purpose of this study is to investigate women's opinions concerning fitness and its role in sustaining a healthy lifestyle.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

It is critical to maintain suitable physical activity habits and keep the body fit and healthy. As a result, gyms and fitness centers are particularly important in promoting fitness. Women are increasingly attending fitness centers for keeping their fitness levels. As a result, the objective of this study is to investigate women's attitudes regarding fitness and the variables that influence them.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To determine the current level of awareness among women about fitness and its importance.
- To explore the attitudes of women towards exercise and

gym in Coimbatore city.

- To identify the food and nutrient intake of women and its impact on their fitness.
- To investigate the food habits and their association with women's fitness in Coimbatore city.
- To examine the factors that influence women's perceptions and attitudes towards fitness, such as socio-demographic characteristics and lifestyle factors.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

- H0: There lies no significant association between the age and frequency of doing exercise or visiting gym.
- H1: There lies significant association between the age and frequency of doing exercise or visiting gym.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study on women's opinions on fitness in Coimbatore has some limitations that should be accepted. One of the challenges is time, which may have hampered the accuracy of the research. Another limiting aspect was the cost of the research. Another drawback of this study is that it only collected data from female respondents in the Coimbatore city region, limiting the generalizability of the conclusions. Nonetheless, this study lays out the foundation for future research into women's views toward exercise. Finally, the sample size was modest, with only 200 female respondents polled.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Neethu K.P.et al. (2018)' colleagues conducted a study to examine the role of dietary fiber as a functional food for cardiovascular health. The study aimed to analyze the relationship between cardiovascular health and food nutrition, giving special attention to anthropometric measurements, lipid profiles, dietary patterns, and lifestyles. The results of the study showed that cardiovascular disease is the most common cause of death among women due to their sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy dietary habits. The study suggested that food choices with high fiber and micronutrients from fruits can prove beneficial in reducing the burden of lifestyle disorders. Simple lifestyle modifications, such as physical activity, can promote better cardiovascular health among women and improve their quality of life.

Marita P. McCabe (2009) Marita P. McCabe conducted a study on "Strategies to change body shape among men and women who attend fitness centers." The objective of the study was to explore health-related messages among people who attend fitness centers. The study found that women attending fitness centers were mainly trying to lose weight and improve fitness, while men were attempting to increase their muscle mass and improve their fitness level. The reasons for exercise predicted the nature of the body change strategies adopted by respondents. Regression analyses demonstrated that the exercises performed by people who attend fitness centers reflect whether they want to lose weight, increase muscle, or improve fitness.

Several studies have examined the factors that influence women's engagement in fitness activities. For example, research has shown that socio-cultural factors such as gender

norms, cultural beliefs about women's physical appearance, and family responsibilities can act as barriers to women's participation in fitness activities. Lack of time and access to fitness facilities have also been identified as significant barriers to women's engagement in fitness activities.

Studies have also explored the role of social support in promoting women's engagement in fitness activities. Research has shown that social support from family and friends can positively influence women's attitudes towards fitness and encourage them to engage in fitness activities. In contrast, lack of social support has been found to be a significant barrier to women's engagement in fitness activities.

While previous research has examined women's perceptions and attitudes towards fitness in India, there is a need for more research in specific contexts such as Coimbatore City. This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by exploring the perceptions and attitudes of women towards fitness in Coimbatore City and identifying the socio-cultural factors that influence their engagement in fitness activities.

METHODOLOGY

Research Method

Our research regarding the effectiveness of women's perceptions and attitudes towards fitness at Coimbatore is descriptive research.

Data Collection

When it comes to data collection there are two methods in general used by researchers to collect data, primary and secondary methods. Secondary data is one which is already collected by some other researcher, not for the reason for a particular study or research. The researcher would like to go for the primary data collection method which will include a questionnaire from the respondents about their women's perceptions and attitudes toward fitness.

Sampling

In general, there are two types of sampling techniques probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In the Probability sample there is a nonzero equal chance for each population element to be selected, Bryman and Bell (2007). There are four types of probability sampling as stated by Bryman and Bell (2007) simple random sample, systematic sample, stratified random sampling, and multi-stage cluster sampling. Whereas, in non-probability sampling, there is no random sampling. As stated by Bryman and Bell (2007) there are three types of non-probability sampling i.e. Convenience Sampling, snowball sampling and quota sampling. According to Bryman and Bell (2007) Convenience sample is one that is conveniently available to the researcher with its goodness of accessibility. The problematic facet of this type of non-probability sampling as stated by Bryman and Bell (2007) is that it is impracticable to generalize the results but at the same time in Bryman and Bell (2007) words convenience sampling more remarkable role than supposed. And as Bryman and Bell (2007) explains in business and management field this technique is more worthy as compare to sample based

on probability sampling. By keeping in view of these, the researcher has used the convenient sampling technique for the purpose of collecting empirical material. The researcher have circulated the questionnaire among the women's perceptions and attitudes towards fitness at Coimbatore.

Sample Design

As mentioned by Kent (2007), in particular, research into a procedure that is being followed for selecting a sampling unit is called sample design. The procedure that is being followed by the writers to select a sampling unit is a mixed process; a mixed process means distributing the survey online as well as in person to women's perceptions and attitudes towards fitness at Coimbatore.

Sample Size

The population for the research in Coimbatore women's perceptions and attitudes towards fitness has been given a Questionnaire to fill. The questionnaire is constructed in simple language in order to reduce the risk of ambiguity.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire has been carefully designed to meet the requirements of the research. The questions have been taken from previous literature on the effectiveness of educational content on women's perceptions and attitudes towards fitness in Coimbatore, with a view to validate the research further. Some of the questions are self-structured to cover the diversity of research problems. The questionnaire consists of two main parts and one sub-part; the first part is mainly focused on questions pertaining to the identification of the effectiveness of women's perceptions. The second part of the questionnaire will cover the attitudes towards fitness at Coimbatore

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS	No	Particular	No of responders	Percentage
Age		18-25 Years	74	37
		26-35 Years	40	20
		36-45 Years	42	21
		Above 45	44	22
		TOTAL	200	100
Marital Status		Married	90	45
		Unmarried	110	55
		TOTAL	200	100
Monthly Family Income		Below 25,000	20	10
		25000 - 50,000	33	16.5
		50,000 - 75,000	68	34
		Above 75000	79	39.5
		TOTAL	200	100
Educational Qualification		School Level	10	5
		Under Graduate	70	35
		Post Graduate	43	21.5
		Professional	77	38.5
		TOTAL	200	100
Awareness on Energy		Not at all aware	35	17.5
		Slightly aware	68	34
		Moderately aware	71	35.5
		Aware	26	13
		TOTAL	200	100
Awareness on Nutrients		Not at all aware	17	8.5
		Slightly aware	97	48.5
		Moderately aware	62	31
		Aware	24	12

	TOTAL	200	100
Awareness on Proteins	Not at all aware	18	9
	Slightly aware	69	34.5
	Moderately aware	84	42
	Aware	29	14.5
	TOTAL	200	100
Awareness on Carbohydrates	Not at all aware	19	9.5
	Slightly aware	83	41.5
	Moderately aware	76	38
	Aware	22	11
	TOTAL	200	100
Regularity of the respondents doing Exercise	Never	36	18
	Rarely	78	39
	Often	57	28.5
	Always	29	14.5
	TOTAL	200	100
Reason for skipping the gym	Lack of Interest	48	24
	Lack of Time	63	31.5
	Lack of Company	77	38.5
	Lack of Money	12	6
	TOTAL	200	100
Time spent on exercise	Does not exercise	58	29
	1 Hour	82	41
	2 Hours	47	23.5
	3 and above hours	13	6.5
	TOTAL	200	100
Duration of the doing exercise	Not doing	53	26.5
	Less than 6 months	68	34
	6 months - 1 year	53	26.5
	More than 1 year	26	13
	TOTAL	200	100
Type of exercise preferred	Walking	82	41
	Jogging	25	12.5
	Exercise	64	32
	Others	29	14.5
	TOTAL	200	100
Average consumption of high Protein	Never	11	5.5
	Rarely	61	30.5
	Often	82	41
	Always	46	23
	TOTAL	200	100
Average consumption of high Vitamin	Never	5	2.5
	Rarely	68	34
	Often	86	43
	Always	41	20.5
	TOTAL	200	100
Intake of Water	Less than 1000 ml	20	10
	1000 - 2000 ml	86	43
	2000 - 3000 ml	74	37
	above 4000 ml	20	10
	TOTAL	200	100
Outside Food	Never	9	4.5
	Rarely	71	35.5
	Often	86	43
	Always	34	17
	TOTAL	200	100
Other Health Drinks	Never	24	12
	Rarely	58	29
	Often	87	43.5
	Always	31	15.5
	TOTAL	200	100
Consumption of Junk Foods	Never	7	3.5
	Rarely	65	32.5
	Often	87	43.5
	Always	41	20.5
	TOTAL	200	100

Preference of Various Activities	Never	48	24
	Rarely	58	29
	Often	54	27
	Always	40	20
	TOTAL	200	100
Have a Personal Coach	Never	41	20.5
	Rarely	57	28.5
	Often	78	39
	Always	24	12
	TOTAL	200	100
Following any Diet Plans	Never	54	27
	Rarely	67	33.5
	Often	50	25
	Always	29	14.5
	TOTAL	200	100
Exercise is Influence of Beauty	Never	39	19.5
	Rarely	61	30.5
	Often	59	29.5
	Always	41	20.5
	TOTAL	200	100
Exercise is an Influence of Health	Never	11	5.5
	Rarely	43	21.5
	Often	84	42
	Always	62	31
	TOTAL	200	100
Exercise Is an Influence of Status	Never	60	30
	Rarely	58	29
	Often	51	25.5
	Always	31	15.5
	TOTAL	200	100
Exercise is Influence of Relaxing	Never	20	10
	Rarely	50	25
	Often	72	36
	Always	58	29
	TOTAL	200	100

MAJOR FINDINGS:

The study provides a detailed analysis of the characteristics and behaviors of respondents toward physical fitness. The majority of respondents were unmarried (55 percent) and in the age group of 18-25 (37 percent). Most respondents were professionals (38.5 percent) and earned above 75000 (39.5 percent). The respondents showed moderate awareness about the energy (35.5 percent), nutrients (48.5 percent), proteins (34.5 percent), and carbohydrates (41.5 percent) required for their daily life. Additionally, most respondents rarely visited the gym (39 percent) due to a lack of time (77 percent). However, the majority of the respondents (82 percent) spend one hour per day on exercise and have started exercising less than 6 months ago (68 percent). Walking is the preferred exercise of the majority of the respondents (82 percent), and personal coaching is preferred by most respondents (39 percent) for exercise in the gym or at home. The respondents often consume high protein (41 percent) and vitamin (43 percent) containing substances, as well as outside food (43 percent), other health drinks (43.5 percent), and junk food (43.5 percent). While most respondents rarely follow any diet plan (33.5 percent), they prefer to exercise regularly for relaxation (36 percent) and health (42 percent). A personal coach is preferred by most respondents (43 percent) to get easy doubt clarification during exercise.

RECOMMENDATION

More information about diets is needed to support women's health and well-being. The benefits of proper physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, and making time for themselves should be stressed. Gyms should play a major part in educating women about the benefits of fitness and the value of living a healthy lifestyle.

It is critical that women understand the benefits of exercise and how it affects their health. A healthy body requires adequate food regulation, and eating habits must be regularly controlled. Women need to consume nutritious foods, high-quality proteins, and omega-3 fatty acids, which can be found in fish.

Females must be aware of the effects of an unhealthy lifestyle and how to prevent them in order to limit their impact. It is critical for optimal well-being to have meals heavy in fiber, starchy carbs, and proteins while limiting saturated fat and sugar. Personal trainers should be hired more often to help women reach their fitness goals.

Women must strike a balance among their health and their hectic schedules in order to live a healthy lifestyle. Women can live an active and nutritious life by raising awareness and providing the data they need.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research is to delve into women's attitudes and perceptions of fitness in Coimbatore. Fitness is necessary for maintaining beneficial health and wellness, as well as carrying out regular tasks and occupations. However, many women ignore their health for a number of reasons. Women must engage in regular physical exercise, such as swimming, gym, cycling, jogging, or other favored sports. According to the findings of the survey, women who go to the gym have preferences for planning, relationships, and personal trainers. To encourage women's fitness, the government should raise awareness and provide a variety of sporting options.

Diet is an additional factor that promotes women's health, however many women who exercise are aware of right diet. To live a healthy and active lifestyle, diet regimens must be followed. Women above the age of 35 should seek medical guidance to identify the optimal diet plan for their body type. Common unhealthy habits that must be addressed include skipping meals and not drinking enough water. Consumption of fast food should also be managed in order to avoid serious medical issues.

There are many fitness centers in Coimbatore which focus to women. These facilities provide female trainers, equipment such as air conditioning and thermal baths, and diet treatments to help ladies obtain a fit figure in a short amount of time. However, the study discovered that a healthy diet.

REFERENCES

1. Neethu, K. P., Deepa, G. S., Nair, M. S., & Nisha, P. (2018). Role of dietary fibre-a functional food for cardiovascular health. *Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research*, 12(1), NE01-NE05. <https://doi.org/10.7860/JCDR/2018/28985.11045>
2. McCabe, M. P. (2009). Strategies to change body shape among men and women who attend fitness centers. *Journal of Applied Biobehavioral Research*, 14(2), 96-105. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9861.2009.00028>.
3. Gupta, N., & Sharma, D. (2017). Women's attitudes towards physical activity and fitness: An Indian perspective. *Journal of Physical Education and Sport*, 17(3), 1425-1431.
4. Jain, A., & Bansal, D. (2019). Socio-cultural barriers to women's

- physical activity in India. *Journal of Physical Education and Sport*, 19(3), 1301-1307.
5. Kaur, J., & Singh, A. (2018). Women's perceptions and attitudes towards physical activity in India. *International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health*, 5(2), 10-14.
6. Arlin, M. (1977), "The science of nutrition", New York: Macmillan Publishing
7. LINDA Z. NIEMAN (1994), "Women's health research: Barriers and opportunity". Mary Ann Libert, Inc, Publishers.
8. Debra A Krummel and P M Kris-Etherton (1996), *Nutrition in women's health* Gaithersburg Md.: Aspen Publishers.
9. Swapana Mukhopadhyay (1998). "Women's health public policy and community action", New Delhi: Manohar.
10. Dorothy Klimis-Zacas and Ira Wolin sky (2003). "Nutritional Concerns of Women's".
11. Judith H. LaRosa and Linda Lewis Alexander (2007). "New Dimensions in women's Health".
12. Laura T. Allerton and Gloria P. Rutherford (2008). "Exercise and women's health: new research". New York: Nova Science Publishers.
13. DiwekarRujuta (2010). "Women and the weight Loss Tamasha". Westland Ltd Publisher.
14. Anne Bolin and Jane Granskog (2012), "Athletic Intruders: Ethnographic Research on Women, Culture and Exercise". State University of New York Publication.
15. Ashton Acton (2013), "Issue in women's studies research".
16. Kothari, C.R, *Research Methodology Methods and Techniques*, Third Edition, New Age International (P) Limited Publishers, 2014.
17. Sachdeva J.K, *Business Research Methodology*, Himalayan Publishing House, Third Revised Edition, 2017.
18. Ana Carbonell (2013) "Usefulness of fitness to establish metabolic syndrome in women", Published by European journal of women's studies, vol no.13, issue no.6, pp 524-531.
19. Laura E. willies (2014) "weighing women down: messages on women weight loss and body shaping", Published by health Communication, vol no.29, Issue no 4, pp 323-331.
20. Erwin Gaspar A. Alampa (2016) "women health and wealth: human development and health care", Published by Asian journal of women's study, vol no.4, pp 76-94
21. Miriam Mutambudzi (21Dec 2016) "Association between workplace psychosocial factors and mental health", Published by women's and health magazine, vol no 56, Issue no 10. Pp 1129-1144.
22. Cameron (2018) "The female aging body: A systematic review of female perspectives on aging, health and body image", Published by journal of women and aging, vol no, 30, Issue no.2, pp 107-117.